yet relaxed and accurate attentiveness then such talk is simply theory or fantasy.

The most important postures are said by some teachers to be directly related to the Eight Trigrams of the I-Ching (see chapter 7). These are:

Ward Off (*P'eng*)	equated with trigram Chien	Moving in the four
Roll-back (*Lu*)	equated with trigram Kun	major compass
Press (*Chi*)	equated with trigram Kan	directions
Push (*An*)	equated with trigram Li	
Pull (*Tsai*)	equated with trigram Sun	
Split (*Lieh*)	equated with trigram Chen	Moving in the four
Elbow (*Chou*)	equated with trigram Tai	minor compass
Shoulder (*Kao*)	equated with trigram Ken	directions

This makes eight postures and to these should be added the Five Steps which are linked by some teachers and writers with the Five Elements (see chapter 7).

Advancing	related to the element metal
Retreating	related to the element wood
Looking left	related to the element water
Looking right	related to the element fire
Equilibrium	related to the element earth

The Eight Postures are sometimes called Gates, Pa-men. Wu Pu is the Chinese for Five Steps. These thirteen movement-postures are the basis for the Yang style of Tai Chi. Although the Eight Gates are theoretically connected with the eight directions of the compass, they do not follow these directions in the forms. Also, in spite of the fact that the Five Steps are sometimes related to five directions: north, south, east, west and centre, this does not have any spatial meaning in the forms either, since all movements can be done in several directions in one form.

Both Chinese and western scholars have commented on the strong Chinese tendency to conserve the past, even in the face of logical reasons for not doing so. As we shall see later, and as we saw in the history, the more prestigious the origin of an idea or theory then the more prestige it could bring to anyone associated with it. This is one of the reasons why in Chinese martial arts in general the presence of theories such as the Five Element theory are so prevalent. This is true in the field of Chinese traditional medicine also, as a later chapter will show. It has been pointed out from time to time that the Five Element

theory is not an infallible one and diagnoses and treatments may have been fudged to make the theory fit.

There are few people who have the time, interest or capacity to study all the aspects of Tai Chi thoroughly and so for most of us it is a matter of accepting or rejecting or holding judgement in suspense about such theories and our own training in the forms. When one reads various articles and books about Tai Chi one cannot fail to realise that ninety-nine per cent of them are simply and uncritically repeating what was said in an earlier book, either through laziness, respect for tradition or lack of thought. Unless we have a burning desire to examine the traditions of Tai Chi then we must ourselves follow such examples or simply ignore what we do not care to investigate further.

THE EIGHT POSTURES OR GATES

1. WARD OFF (P'ENG)

In the Chen style a movement similar to Ward Off is assumed as one of the current forms begins. In it, the feet are spread wide apart as if riding a very large horse.

In the Yang style of Yang Cheng-fu we find two versions. One is exemplified by Cheng Man-ch'ing with the left hand raised in front of the chest, the right arm lowered in front of and to the side of the thigh, and the rear foot turned in about forty-five degrees. The other, seen in old photographs, shows Yang himself with the rear foot turned out at ninety degrees to the forward facing direction and the arms in a slightly different position from that of Cheng. Also, the torso is held differently. The Combined Tai Chi form, which is a synthesis produced in 1956 in China, and taught in the West by Bow-Sim Mark,

